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PARIS FOR WILLIAN JORDAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/25/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#) [MO](#) [WI](#) [FR](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PBTS](#)
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE ON WESTERN SAHARA POLICY

REF: REF: USUN 259

Classified By: IO PDAS James B. Warlick for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) This is an action request. USUN is directed to deliver a demarche to the UN Secretariat and the French mission to the United Nations in accordance with the objectives in paragraphs 2 and 3. Embassy Paris should deliver a demarche to appropriate officials in accordance with objectives in paragraph 3.

OBJECTIVES

12. (S) Given the lack of progress on the Manhasset talks (reftel) and the upcoming April 30 expiration of the current MINURSO peacekeeping operation, the Department wishes to publicly announce U.S. support for autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty as the realistic end state for Western Sahara. The goal of this statement would be to push the Polisario and Morocco to a negotiated agreement on autonomy of some kind. (Note: This would require the Polisario to abandon its current goal of a referendum on independence. End note.) Accordingly, in advance of the next periodic report from UNSYG Personal Envoy Van Walsum and in advance of the April 30 MINURSO vote, USUN is requested to seek to shape the Secretary General's report and to ask the French to make a

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statement similar to ours. USUN is to deliver a demarche to UN Secretariat senior officials at the appropriate level to pursue the following objectives:

-- Encourage the UNSYG Personal Envoy for Western Sahara to declare in the next UNSYG report to the UNSC, as he has claimed he would, that autonomy is the only realistic solution to the Western Sahara dispute. Reiterate that humanitarian concerns for the people of the Sahara require that we seek a real way forward, one that will bring us closer to resolving the status of the region's refugees.

-- Encourage influential leaders in the Secretariat to allow the UNSYG Personal Envoy's definitive language about the two proposals to remain in the final version of the UNSYG report to the UNSC.

13. (S) USUN is to deliver a demarche to the French Mission to the UN, and Embassy Paris is to deliver a demarche to the French MFA at the appropriate levels, to pursue the following

objectives:

-- Inform the French that the USG intends, as part of our Explanation of Vote following the MINURSO mandate renewal, to state our view that an independent Western Sahara is not a realistic option for resolving the conflict, and that autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty is the only realistic solution. Inform the French that humanitarian concerns for the people of the Sahara require that we seek a real way forward, one that will bring us closer to resolving the status of the region,s refugees.

-- Urge the French to make a policy statement similar to ours and in a similar timeframe after MINURSO mandate renewal, declaring that an independent Western Sahara is not a realistic option for resolving the conflict and that autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty is the only realistic solution.

-- Solicit French support for/opinion on a 12-month (vice six-month) renewal for the MINURSO mandate to provide the parties with time and the political space to negotiate the terms of autonomy, and note our preference that the language of the rollover UNSCR be relatively non-controversial.

-- Ask the French what messages, and at what level, the Moroccans have given regarding their preferred next steps on the Western Sahara; probe for any further background to France,s position on this issue;

-- Coordinate with the French to approach Van Walsum to urge that his report include language casting doubt on the viability of an independent Western Sahara and recommending that the talks be re-focused on autonomy as the only realistic outcome for the dispute.

-- Inform the French that we are explaining our policy to the British with the goal of seeking UK support.

-- Solicit French input on any other Friends or UNSC members who might be willing to make statements supportive of autonomy as "a" or "the" realistic end state for Western Sahara.

-- Ask the French for their views on the best opportunity, after the statements, to increase dialogue between the parties, either within the context of the current talks or outside of them.

BACKGROUND

14. (S) On March 21, 2008, an inter-agency Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) was held to discuss a USG public policy change on the Western Sahara, given the current impasse in the UN-brokered talks. The PCC judged that tensions between Morocco and the Polisario did not portend a near-term outbreak of violence. A majority of PCC participants decided to pursue the following steps, with an aim of breaking the impasse and re-focusing the talks on autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty. The steps include:

a) Encourage the UNSYG Personal Envoy to declare, in the next UNSYG report to the UNSC, that autonomy is the only realistic solution to the Western Sahara dispute;

b) Negotiate a clean UNSC resolution renewing the MINURSO monitoring mission in Western Sahara on April 30 for twelve months if possible;

c) Make a policy statement in our Explanation of Vote indicating our view that an independent Western Sahara is not a realistic option for resolving the conflict, that autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty is the only realistic solution, and that the parties should negotiate on the details of autonomy, be it the current Moroccan proposal or one that might be offered by the Polisario;

d) Invite the Polisario in the statement for talks in Washington as an incentive for them to engage with the Moroccans on autonomy;

REPORTING DEADLINE

15. (U) USUN should report the results of the demarche NLT 3 April, 2008.

POINT OF CONTACT

16. (U) The points of contact for cable are IO/PSC Tanaz Khambatta at 202 736-7936 and IO/UNP Joseph Fitzgerald at 202 647-2641.
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